

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

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P 012301Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN PRIORITY
AMCONSUL KADUNAPRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 110979

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: AMGT, ASIG, NI

SUBJECT: CLOSURE OF CONSULATE AT IBADAN

REF: A) LAGOS 3227, B) AMBASSADOR/CHARGE TELCON APRIL 26

1. WE HAVE DECIDED TO CLOSE THE CONSULATE AT IBADAN BY AUGUST 1 BUT TO MAINTAIN THE CULTURAL CENTER AT IBADAN.
2. CHARGE SHOULD SEEK APPOINTMENT SOONEST WITH APPROPRIATE OFFICER OF THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. WE SUGGEST HE SEEK APPOINTMENT WITH THE HEAD OF THE AMERICAS DEPARTMENT, AMBASSADOR MUSA. HE SHOULD MAKE A STATEMENT AND
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LEAVE AN AIDE MEMOIRE ALONG THE LINES OF PARAS 3-9.

3. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO CLOSE THE CONSULATE AT IBADAN. THE CULTURAL CENTER WILL BE RETAINED.
4. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN THE DECISION RELUCTANTLY, RECOGNIZING THE FACT THAT THERE HAS BEEN

A US CONSULATE IN IBADAN SINCE JULY 2, 1962.

5. THE PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR THIS DECISION ARE THAT THE OPENING IN THE NEAR FUTURE OF THE LAGOS-IBADAN EXPRESSWAY WILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE ADEQUATELY TO SUPPORT AMERICAN

INTERESTS IN THE IBADAN AREA FROM LAGOS. NIGERIAN CITIZENS SEEKING US VISAS AND OTHER CONSULAR SERVICES WILL BE ABLE TO OBTAIN THEM PROMPTLY AND CONVENIENTLY FROM THE CONSULAR SECTION OF THE EMBASSY AT LAGOS. THE ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES NOW PROVIDED BY THE IBADAN CONSULATE STAFF CAN BE JUST AS WELL BE FURNISHED BY THE EMBASSY'S ECONOMIC SECTION IN LAGOS. THUS THE HIGH COST OF MAINTAINING A SEPARATE CONSULAR PRESENCE AT IBADAN CAN NO LONGER BE JUSTIFIED.

6. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THE CONTRIBUTION WHICH THE US CULTURAL CENTER IS MAKING TO THE LIFE OF THE IBADAN COMMUNITY AND INTENDS TO CONTINUE TO MAKE THESE SERVICES AVAILABLE IN IBADAN.

7. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT NOTES THAT THE PATTERN OF AMERICAN INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN NIGERIA IN THE PAST FEW YEARS HAS CHANGED SUBSTANTIALY AND THAT INVESTMENT, PARTICULARLY IN THE PETROLEUM AND PETRO-CHEMICAL SECTOR, PROMISES GREATLY TO INCREASE THE CONFIDENTIAL

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NUMBER OF AMERICANS IN THE PORT HARCOURT AREA. EXPANDING ECONOMIC AND TRADE OPPORTUNITIES GENERALLY THROUGHOUT THE EASTERN STATES OF NIGERIA WILL PRODUCE NEW INTEREST BY AMERICAN COMPANIES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS INTERESTED IN COLLABORATION WITH NIGERIAN DEVELOPMENT PLANS.

8. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACCORDINGLY HOPES THAT THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT WILL AGREE IN PRINCIPLE TO THE OPENING OF AN AMERICAN CONSULATE AT PORT HARCOURT TO PROVIDE CONSULAR AND ECONOMIC PROMOTION SERVICES TO AMERICANS RESIDENT IN THE AREA AND TO OFFER VISA AND OTHER SERVICES TO THE NIGERIAN COMMUNITY. AS FOR CONSULAR SERVICES PROVIDED TO NIGERIAN CITIZENS, A CONSULATE IN PORT HARCOURT WILL BE MORE ACCESSIBLE THAN LAGOS FOR THE SOME 8,000 VISA APPLICANTS FROM THE EASTERN STATES WHO APPLY EACH YEAR.

9. WE ARE NOT YET PREPARED TO PROPOSE A DATE FOR THE OPENING OF SUCH A CONSULATE, BUT ESTIMATE THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE BY 1980.

10. AMBASSADOR EASUM HAS DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH

COMMISSIONER GARBA WHO SEEMED TO HAVE NO PROBLEMS WITH
IBADAN'S CLOSURE AND WHO SAID HE THOUGHT THE ARGUMENTS
FOR OPENING IN PORT HARCOURT APPEARED REASONABLE. HE
SAID HE WAS RELIEVED WE WERE NOT ASKING FOR ENUGU - "YOU
KNOW, THE BIAFRA PROBLEM". VANCE

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